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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Food Distribution Administration

TENTATIVE U. S. STANDARDS FOR CLASSES AND GRADES FOR DRESSED TURKEYS

Tentative U. S. Classes for Dressed Turkeys

According to Age and Sex

- Young Hens - Female birds usually less than one year old, soft meated with flexible breast bone.
- Young Toms - Male birds usually less than one year old, soft meated with flexible breast bone.
- Old Hens - Mature female birds more than one year old, with toughened flesh and hardened breast bone.
- Old Toms - Mature male birds more than one year old, with toughened flesh and hardened breast bone.

According to Method of Plucking, Dressing,
Finishing, Chilling and Packing

- Plucking: Scalded - Turkeys that have been immersed in scalding water before plucking, usually at a temperature of 170° to 180° Fahrenheit.
- Semi-scalded - Turkeys that have been immersed in hot water before plucking, usually at a temperature of 125° to 130° Fahrenheit.
- Dry-plucked - Turkeys that have been plucked dry; that is, without immersing in water.
- Dressing: Drawn - Turkeys from which the entrails are removed.
- Undrawn - Turkeys from which the entrails are not removed.

- Finishing: Milk-fed - Turkeys with skin and flesh bleached by feeding milk in the ration and with muscle fiber softened by fatty deposits throughout the connective tissue.
- Grain-fed - Turkeys that show no marked evidence of milk feeding.
- Chilling: Fresh - Turkeys that have not been hard chilled or frozen.
 dressed
- Fresh - Fresh dressed turkeys that have been hard chilled
 hard-chilled or frozen, but have not developed any appearance of cold storage stock, and show no evidence of deterioration from freezing and have not been held at low temperature for more than 60 days.
- Storage - Turkeys that have been held at a low temperature for more than 60 days or show evidence of deterioration from freezing, regardless of time held.
- Packing: Dry - Turkeys that have been packed dry.
- Iced - Turkeys that have been packed in ice.

Tentative U. S. Grades for Dressed Turkeys

- U. S. Grade AA - Commercially perfect specimens of any class.
- U. S. Grade A - The second highest grade.
- U. S. Grade B - The third highest grade.
- U. S. Grade C - Edible birds below the grade of U. S. Grade B, except such as are specifically excluded by the detailed specifications for U. S. Grade C.

Specifications for Tentative U. S. Standards for Grades for Dressed Young Hen Turkeys

U. S. Grades	Quality Specifications for Individual Birds
U.S. Grade AA	<p>Young, fine grained, soft meated female bird, with broad full-fleshed breast extending well back to the rear of the bird, with the breast flat across the top rather than pointed. The entire carcass fully covered with fat. Must be fully bled, extra well dressed and free of pinfeathers. No flesh bruises allowed; and only very slight skin abrasions, bruises or discolorations permitted, none of which shall be on the breast. Slightly dented breast bone (not to exceed 1/8 inch in depth) permitted but no crooked breast or other deformities allowed. No open tears or sewn skin permitted. A broken or disjoined wing, or a broken or disjoined leg not permitted. Must be dry picked or semi-scalded and must be dry packed.</p>
U.S. Grade A	<p>Young, soft meated female bird, with well-fleshed breast, and with entire carcass well covered with fat. Must be well bled, well dressed, and practically free of pinfeathers, especially on the breast. Only slight flesh or skin bruises, abrasions, or discolorations permitted, with breast practically free of such defects. Slightly dented breast bone (not to exceed 1/4 inch) permitted. Slightly curved, but no crooked breast permitted. Must be free from deformities. Broken wings above the wing tips or broken legs not permitted. A disjoined leg or wing permitted if only slightly bruised. Bird with crop properly washed out or properly removed may be included in this grade. No torn skin permitted. No sewn skin permitted on the breast or fleshy part of the carcass, and only slight tears, sewn, permitted on the back. Must be dry picked or semi-scalded.</p>
U.S. Grade B	<p>Young female bird, with fairly well-fleshed breast, and with carcass fairly well covered with fat. Must be fairly well bled and dressed, and may show scattered pinfeathers over the entire carcass. Slight flesh or skin bruises permitted, but not more than three such defects if on the breast. Fairly numerous skin abrasions or discolorations permitted. Abrasions or tears over 3 inches in length, on the fleshy parts of the carcass, not permitted unless properly sewn. Slight open tears less than 3 inches in length may be permitted if on the back or over the back of wings. Dented or slightly crooked breast bone or other slight deformities permitted. One broken wing or one broken leg permitted if bone does not protrude through the flesh and if not showing excessive bruise or blood clot.</p>
U.S. Grade C	<p>Young female bird which may be poorly fleshed and with carcass poorly covered with fat. May show evidence of poor bleeding and have numerous pinfeathers over the entire carcass. Numerous skin abrasions and discolorations permitted. Hunchback or other deformities allowed, if bird is fairly well fleshed. Open tears permitted in skin. Broken bones or bird badly bruised so as to make any appreciable part of the carcass inedible not permitted. Bird showing emaciation or external evidence of disease or other condition which renders it unwholesome or unfit for human food not permitted.</p>

Specifications for Tentative U. S. Standards for Grades
for Dressed Young Tom, Old Hen and Old Tom Turkeys

Young Tom

- U. S. Grade AA - Young male bird with quality specifications the same as for U. S. Grade AA Young Hen with due allowance made for fleshing conditions characteristic of its sex. No staggy condition permitted.
- U. S. Grade A - Young male bird with quality specifications the same as for U. S. Grade A Young Hen, with due allowance made for fleshing conditions characteristic of its sex. Slight staggy condition permitted, if bird is soft meated.
- U. S. Grade B - Young male bird with quality specifications the same as for U. S. Grade B Young Hen, with due allowance made for fleshing conditions characteristic of its sex.
- U. S. Grade C - Young male bird with quality specifications the same as for U. S. Grade C Young Hen.

Old Hen

- U. S. Grade AA - Mature female bird with quality specifications the same as for U. S. Grade AA Young Hen, with due allowance made for fleshing conditions characteristic of its age.
- U. S. Grade A - Mature female bird with quality specifications the same as for U. S. Grade A Young Hen, with due allowance made for fleshing conditions characteristic of its age.
- U. S. Grade B - Mature female bird with quality specifications the same as for U. S. Grade B Young Hen, with due allowance made for fleshing conditions characteristic of its age.
- U. S. Grade C - Mature female bird with quality specifications the same as for U. S. Grade C Young Hen.

Old Tom

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| U. S. Grade AA | - Mature male bird with quality specifications the same as for U. S. Grade AA Young Tom, with due allowance made for fleshing conditions characteristic of its age. |
| U. S. Grade A | - Mature male bird with quality specifications the same as for U. S. Grade A Young Tom, with due allowance made for fleshing conditions characteristic of its age. |
| U. S. Grade B | - Mature male bird with quality specifications the same as for U. S. Grade B Young Tom, with due allowance made for fleshing conditions characteristic of its age. |
| U. S. Grade C | - Mature male bird with quality specifications the same as for U. S. Grade C Young Tom. |

Description of Terms used in the
"Quality Specifications for Individual Birds"

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| Full-fleshed | - Bird with plump, broad breast which carries well back to the rear of bird and with breast flat across the top rather than pointed. Thighs, back, and all bones covered with a thick layer of flesh. |
| Well-fleshed | - Bird with well developed breast; well covered with flesh over the thighs and back. |
| Poorly-fleshed | - Bird with narrow breast and with thin covering of flesh over thighs and back. |
| Poorly-bled | - Bird with red pin marks on breast, thighs, or wing tips, or skin reddened from blood clots. |
| Slight deformities | - Dented or notched breast, crooked back, curved breast bone, or misshapen legs or wings. |
| Deformities | - Hunch back, crooked breast, or other serious abnormal conditions. |
| Slightly curved | - Breast bone slightly out of line but not crooked. |
| Callouses | - Hardened and darkened areas on the breast bone usually caused by roosting. |

Skin abrasions	- Reddened, bruised, or scuffed outer skin caused by rubbing or rough handling in dressing, or packing, or otherwise.
Pigmented skin	- Skin of a bluish green color usually found over the tail and back, caused by secretion of feather pigment under the skin.
Skin bruise	- A bruise of the skin sufficient to form a blood clot under it but not extending into the flesh.
Flesh bruise	- A bruise in the flesh which shows through the skin but does not move with the skin.
Free of pinfeathers	- No noticeable pinfeathers.
Slight dressing defects	- Few scattered pinfeathers on breast or back; blood spots in wing tips; one slight skin abrasion less than three inches in diameter; or two broken wing tips.
Dressing defects	- Pinfeathers scattered more or less over the entire carcass; incomplete bleeding showing in places other than the wing tips, a cut or tear three inches or more in length or more than one cut of any length; skin abrasion of more than three inches in diameter; broken leg, wing or other bone in edible part of carcass; feed in crop; dirty feet, body or vent.
Extra well dressed	- Commercially perfect dressing.
Well dressed	- All conditions listed as "dressing defects" excluded.
Uniform pack and size	- Light-colored and yellow-skinned birds packaged separately; packages and paper linings uniform in size, shape, and color; not over two pounds variation in the weight of individual birds packed in the same box or package except in case of U. S. Grade C and Old Toms.
Edible bird	- Bird that shows no external evidence of disease or other condition that would render it unwholesome or unfit for human food.
Slight staggy condition	- Spurs somewhat developed but soft; slight pouchy breast but still soft meat.
Staggy condition	- Extended breast, pouchy or milky, with toughened flesh.
Appreciable part of carcass	- An amount equal to 1/4 of entire carcass.

Weight Specifications for Dressed Turkeys

With the exception of Old Toms, and U. S. Grade C birds, turkeys must be packed with only a 2-pound variation per bird per box or package beginning with 8 to 10 pounds; 10 to 12 pounds; 12 to 14 pounds; 14 to 16 pounds; etc.

U. S. Grade C turkeys must be packed with only a 3-pound variation per bird per box or package.

Old Toms must be packed with only a 5-pound variation per bird per box or package.

Tentative U. S. Wholesale Grades for Dressed Turkeys

U. S. GRADE AA - A lot of dressed turkeys consisting of three or more wholesale packages shall contain not less than 90 percent birds of the quality of U. S. Grade AA, the balance to be of the quality of U. S. Grade A and with no individual package in the lot to contain more U. S. Grade A birds than in the proportion of two to each twelve. In a lot consisting of one or two wholesale packages, the tolerance for individual packages mentioned above may apply to each package.

U. S. GRADE A - A lot of dressed turkeys consisting of three or more wholesale packages shall contain not less than 90 percent birds of the quality of U. S. Grade A or better, the balance to be of the quality of U. S. Grade B and with no individual package in the lot to contain more U. S. Grade B birds than in the proportion of two to each twelve. In a lot consisting of one or two wholesale packages, the tolerance for individual packages mentioned above may apply to each package.

U. S. GRADE B - A lot of dressed turkeys consisting of three or more wholesale packages shall contain not less than 90 percent birds of the quality of U. S. Grade B or better, the balance to be of the quality of U. S. Grade C and with no individual package in the lot to contain more U. S. Grade C birds than in the proportion of two to each twelve. In a lot consisting of one or two wholesale packages, the tolerance for individual packages mentioned above may apply to each package.

U. S. GRADE C - All birds shall be of the quality of U. S. Grade C or better. No birds obviously unfit for human food permitted.

General Grading Requirements

1. Any turkey that has feed in its crop will be considered as below grade. Turkeys with crop properly washed out or with crop properly removed (the entire crop removed through a short incision of the skin at the back and side of the neck), either sewn or unsewn, may be included in the grades of U. S. Grade A, U. S. Grade B and U. S. Grade C, provided they otherwise meet the requirements of those grades and provided that there is no appreciable leakage of feed materials into the crop cavity.
2. All feathers, including the neck feathers above the head wrap, garters around the knees and fan feathers on the wing tips, must be removed from the carcass or the

bird will be considered as below grade, except that turkeys with fan feathers on the wing tips may be included in the grades of U. S. Grade A, U. S. Grade B and U. S. Grade C, provided they otherwise meet the requirements of those grades and provided further that the fan feathers are free of blood or other foreign material.

3. Unsewn torn skin is not permitted in Grade AA, nor in U. S. Grade A. Unsewn torn skin is permitted in U. S. Grade B only, if on the back, or back of wings and if less than three inches in length. Open tears are permitted in U. S. Grade C. Turkeys with unsewn torn skin, except as such tears are permitted in U. S. Grade B and U. S. Grade C must be lowered one grade.
4. Turkeys with dirty feet are considered below grade.
5. Turkeys with dirty vents are considered below grade.
6. Turkeys with dirty or bloody heads or bodies are considered below grade.
7. No skin pigmentation is permitted in U. S. Grade AA. It is permitted only on the tail of a U. S. Grade A bird, and no further than over the hips on a U. S. Grade B bird.
8. Turkeys showing callouses on the breast bone are not permitted in U. S. Grade AA. If of a slight character and not more than one inch in length, they may be permitted in U. S. Grade A. If not over three inches in length and not too dark, they may be permitted in U. S. Grade B.
9. Turkeys with improper head wraps or head wrapping may be graded only when the grader is certain this condition will be corrected before the birds are packed.

Ice packed dressed turkeys without head wraps may be included in the grades of U. S. Grade A, U. S. Grade B, and U. S. Grade C, provided they otherwise meet the requirements of those grades and provided that the heads have been carefully and thoroughly cleaned of blood, so that there is no appreciable soiling of dressed carcasses with which the heads may come into contact.
10. An individual turkey may be marked with a tag showing the proper U. S. Grade only when it has been graded by a grader authorized by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.
11. Individual turkeys may be marked with U. S. Grade only when grade tags or labels approved by the U. S. Department of Agriculture are used and are attached to the birds in an approved manner.
12. When an individual turkey is tagged to indicate its U. S. Grade, the grade tag also must state the age, that is whether the bird is "young" or "old".
13. A package in which officially graded birds are packed may be stamped with the proper U. S. Grade whether or not the individual birds in the package are labeled with a U. S. Grade.

14. All turkeys packed in the same container must be of the same class, grade, color, and within the same weight class except that birds of different classes, grades or weight classes may be packed together provided the number of birds of each class and grade is plainly marked on the outside of the package.
15. Turkeys shall be labeled with U. S. Grade tags only by the authorized grader who graded them or by persons under his direct supervision.
16. Each Government authorized grader must have and use a poultry thermometer for taking internal temperatures.
17. Turkeys shall not be graded and marked or tagged with a U. S. Grade until they have been pre-cooled to an internal temperature of at least 36° F., unless the grader is sure they will be so cooled before packing.
18. A grading memorandum should be made out at each shipping point, regardless of the size of the lot, and a grading certificate issued on each carlot or less-carlot shipment.
19. Where turkeys which have been previously graded and regraded and show discoloration of skin, darkening of flesh and development of "off" condition of skin, due to holding in storage or during transit or warehousing, these characteristics shall be considered as factors of condition and not of grade. They shall not be considered in determining the grade upon regrading, but such condition factors must be noted on the grading certificate.
20. Turkeys that are dark or blistered or skin dried from freezing cannot be graded into the two top grades.
21. All turkeys must be free of any condition as evidenced by external appearance which would render them unwholesome for food.

Recommendations for Standardizing the Dressing
and Packing of Dressed Turkeys

1. All turkeys should be box packed in single layer boxes.
2. Packages should be lined with good quality 30-pound waxed or parchment paper.
3. Packages should be of uniform size, color and markings.
4. Packages should be clean, odorless and of sufficient strength to carry the birds in good condition.
5. The net weight should be marked on the box, also the number of birds.
6. Barrel packed turkeys should show the number of birds, the class and the gross, tare and net weights.
7. The U. S. Grade should be stenciled plainly on the end of each box or in a prominent place on other packages of officially graded turkeys.

8. Any U. S. Grade name may be supplemented by such breed, variety or other descriptive terms as may more completely describe the lot of turkeys, as U. S. Grade A "milk fed" turkeys.
9. Private brands and class numbers may be stenciled or stamped on packages of officially graded turkeys in addition to the U. S. Grade.
10. Stencil marks on boxes should be at least $3/4$ inches high.
11. All heads should be wrapped in good quality 60-pound water finish fiber or brown waxed paper.
12. All turkeys should be bled through the mouth.
13. All turkeys should be packed rump lock side pack.
14. Turkeys showing pigmented skin of a bluish green character over the back should be graded according to these specifications and should be packed in separate containers showing their proper grade and condition.

Approved:

EW Kitchen

Deputy Director
Food Distribution Administration